

# Indiana House of Representatives

## News and Information

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### **BLACK CAUCUS: GOVERNOR'S WORDS OF HATE JEOPARDIZE 2005 SESSION**

INDIANAPOLIS – Members of the Indiana Black Legislative Caucus today criticized Gov. Mitch Daniels for engaging in personal attacks on lawmakers that only serve to jeopardize the chances of passing major legislative initiatives that will benefit Hoosiers of all ages.

"With two months to go before the end of the 2005 legislative session, there is plenty of time for the governor and members of the House and Senate to reach a consensus on issues like the budget, education and health care," said State Rep. Gregory Porter (D-Indianapolis), chairman of the caucus. "However, if the governor chooses to engage in partisan attacks rather than reaching a bipartisan consensus on these issues, then he is placing his agenda at risk."

Indiana House members returned to work on Monday (March 7) after legislative activity was suspended due to the House Republicans' insistence on pursuing initiatives that would require voters to provide photo identification at the polls and would allow the governor to appoint an inspector general who would have the ability to overrule decisions made by local elected prosecutors.

"A voter ID bill serves no purpose other than to frighten minorities and seniors away from the polls on Election Day," Porter noted. "As desired by the governor, an inspector general would have the ability to pursue witch hunts without any kind of accountability from the voters. Does Indiana need its own version of Ken Starr? We think not."

"Since House Republicans refused to seek compromises on these bills that would protect the rights of voters across Indiana, the Black Legislative Caucus joined with House Democrats to kill these onerous bills," he continued. "With two months to go, there is plenty of time to reach a compromise that can satisfy all of our concerns, but the governor elected to engage in unwarranted personal attacks against Democrats."

Specifically, Daniels accused House Democrats of engaging in a "car bombing" by ensuring the bills did not pass.

"At a time when young men and women are dying in Iraq, I think it is in extremely poor taste to compare the actions of lunatics overseas to those of a group of lawmakers who are simply representing the views of their constituents and many others across our state," Porter said. "Indeed, by using such language, the governor shows that he has no understanding of how the political process works, and is only too happy to engage in the kind of hateful language that serves only to block meaningful reform."

Since the governor has only served in office for two months, Porter said he was hopeful that Daniels would be able to become more experienced in handling the duties of his office before the session wraps up in late April.

"I know that Gov. Daniels comes to government from the world of business, where executives are used to getting what they want, no matter how destructive those policies are," Porter said. "In the weeks to come, I hope he follows the example set by someone like Evan Bayh, who quickly grasped the need for bipartisan compromise and worked to pass legislation that benefits millions. The Black Caucus stands ready to help the governor in any way we can to truly represent all the people of Indiana, not just a narrow range of special interests."

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